

TYPE TALKS

Building an International Design Community

Founder, John Battista De Santis
Pratt Institute — Associate Degree Programs

A speaker relationship pipeline I pitched, funded, and continue to develop and maintain — connecting students directly with designers, typographers, educators, and creative leaders from around the world.

type-talk.org

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TYPE TALKS • Origin & Approach

Where it came from

Some of the most valuable lessons in my career came from collaborating with designers across countries and cultures through work with the United Nations, the Italy America-Chamber of Commerce, and Webb Communications. That experience shaped a conviction: the strongest ideas rarely come from one point of view.

What I built

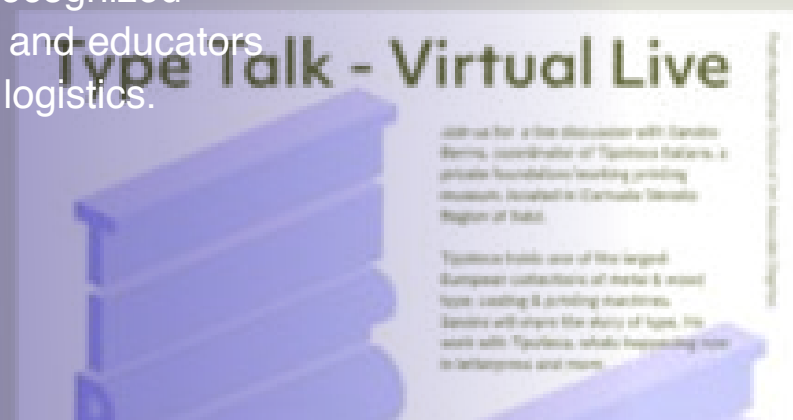
I developed the concept and pitched a proposal to Pratt's DEI Research Seed Grant — a competitive review process. The proposal was funded with resources to launch. It was presented at Pratt's inaugural Research Open House at the Research Yard, Brooklyn Navy Yard. From there, I handled outreach and relationship development: identifying and recruiting internationally recognized speakers, building relationships with designers and educators abroad, developed visual identity, coordinating logistics.

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Pratt
Manhattan

with Sandro Berra



TYPE TALKS • Global Reach

Speakers and conversations connecting Pratt students with professionals from the United States, Italy, Cuba, China, and the United Kingdom.

Institutional recognition

Type Talks was selected for presentation at Pratt Institute’s inaugural Research Open House at the Research Yard, Brooklyn Navy Yard — presented alongside faculty research in sustainability, climate adaptation, community development, information visualization, and design incubation.

Featured speakers have included:

- Sadie Red Wing — Native American Graphic Design
- Barrie Tullett — *The Typographic Dante*
- Sandro Berra — Tipoteca Italiana
- Gaetano Grizzanti — *Campo Grafico*
- Nelson Ponce — Cuban Poster Design
- Li Xu — Chinese Character Design
- Kamal Mansour — Global Writing Systems

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Native American Graphic Design With Sadie Red Wing

Sadie Red Wing, a Lakota graphic designer/educator, member and advocate of the Spirit Lake Nation, Fort Totten, North Dakota. Sadie shared perspectives on indigenous peoples graphic design and symbolism in that



Chinese Character Speaking - Li Xu

Professor Beijing Institute Graphic Communication. Founder: International Poster Festival Shenzhen.

Solve the problem of information transmission. Characters are silent language that expressed in Silence.



Barrie Tullett The Typographic Dante”

The Typographic Dante is a series of typographic illustrations created of Dante Alighieri’s The Divine Comedy.

Barrie, Programme Leader for Graphic Design at University of Lincoln illustrates 100 Cantos of Dante’s Divine Comedy using different technology.

Nelson Ponce – Cuban Posters

Ponce, a renowned Cuban Illustrator/Poster Designer in Havana Cuba His poster for Vampiros en la Habana brought him national recognition. Is a co-founder of the Camaleon Collective, is Graphic Design curator at Havana’s Fabrica de Arte Cubano.



Kamal Mansour
Writing Around the World:
What are stages from early written forms to contemporary writing? Which inventions changed the course of writing? Kamal, at Monotype Imaging contributed to creation of Unicode-compliant fonts for scripts of the world.



Gaetano Grizzanti – Campo Grafico

An award winning brand consultant from Milan; discusses Campo Grafico, regarded and recognized globally for its design “distinctiveness”. To mark the 90th anniversary of Campo Grafico journal, printed 1933-39,



Tipoteca Italy - Sandro Berra

Tipoteca Italiana, a private foundation/working printing museum, (Veneto, Italy).

Tipoteca holds one of the largest European collections of metal & wood type, casting & printing machines.

TYPE TALKS • Why It Matters

An idea grew into something that created opportunities for others: students gained access to voices they might never have encountered, Pratt strengthened its international network of designers and educators, and a grant-funded proposal became a lasting part of the Institute's academic community.

This reflects how I approach my work: identify where thoughtful collaboration can create something that doesn't yet exist, build the partnerships to make it real, and design initiatives that keep generating value long after the original idea launched.

